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ABSTRACT

This workshop guide is the second in the Conservation Issues Forum Series produced by the Izaak Walton League of America's Sustainability Education Project. The guide, a tool for discussing critical topics with conservationists and community leaders, describes a series of six activities through which community members may work together to develop strategies to address community sustainability issues. Guidelines for organizing and conducting a six-hour workshop for 12-36 people are provided. The guide is divided into four main sections: (1) "Workshop Planning"; (2) "Getting the Workshop Started"; (3) "Workshop Activities"; and (4) "Workshop Follow-Up." The planning section discusses funding, the role of the workshop leader, participants, facilities, a suggested agenda, registration, writing a press release, and checklists for materials and planning. The second and third sections contain participant sign-in forms, activity sheets, descriptions of the activities, and special workshop leader directions. Specific activities include: "The Power of One" (a self-audit activity), "Gauging Engagement Potential," "Community Success Stories Panel," and "Building a Constituency." Contains a glossary, bibliography, and selected World Wide Web sites. (PVD)

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Community Voices For Sustainability

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A Workshop Guide

Environments For Life
Conservation Issues Forum Series

Izaak Walton League of America
Sustainability Education Project
February 1998

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Community Voices For Sustainability

A Workshop Guide

Environments For Life Conservation Issues Forum Series

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The Sustainability Education Project is a conservation initiative working to bring the impacts of human population growth, economic development and natural resource consumption into balance with the limits of nature for the benefit of current and future generations.

Funding is provided by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the S.H. Cowell Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The opinions expressed are those of the author.

For more information about the Sustainability Education Project or additional copies of this publication, write to the Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, Md. 20878-2983; phone (301) 548-0150; fax to (301) 548-0149; send e-mail to sustain@iwla.org; or visit our World Wide Web site at http://www.iwla.org.

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Before You Begin

Community sustainability is cultivated in places where people pursue environmental stewardship, economic security, civic democracy and social justice as complementary goals. The processes through which communities work toward sustainability are inclusive, citizen-led, proactive and consensus-driven. They are democratic.

Like democracy, sustainability flourishes in an environment where citizens share common values, principles and beliefs. U.S. citizens value individual rights and responsibilities, the common good, democratic procedures for developing laws and the importance of respecting those laws. Sustainability requires more. Sustainability demands that development decisions respect environmental carrying capacity and ensure environmental justice and economic health. Sustainability places a high value on preserving and restoring native species, biological diversity and ecological systems. Sustainability aims to insure that future generations have opportunities for pursuing lives of quality and dignity at least as good as our own.

Although learning and practicing the skills of active citizenship are essential, there is no greater or more urgent focus for these skills than the pursuit of environmental and economic sustainability. Despite declining birthrates, the world's human population still is projected to grow from 5.9 billion currently to more than 7.9 billion by 2020. By the middle of the next century, economic activity and the demands on the Earth's resources are projected to increase fivefold to tenfold to meet this population's needs. Even with effective conservation practices, natural resource demands may exceed the rate at which many renewable natural resources are regenerated.

The processes through which communities work toward sustainability are inclusive, citizen-led, proactive and consensus driven. They are democratic.

In response to the economic, social and environmental pressures we face in meeting the needs of current and future generations, democratic societies will depend on active citizen participation to shape just strategies and solutions. Similarly, the ability of democratic societies to survive depends on our success in achieving sustainability.

The Izaak Walton League of America's commitment to community sustainability requires that we address education about sustainability as the foundation of our conservation efforts. The League does not view education about sustainability as a top-down process that gives specific solutions to complex regional and local problems. Education about sustainability is a way of continually asking better questions about the relationship between people and the environment. It is a lifelong learning process that requires knowledge of the complex interconnections between social and economic issues and activities, and of their dependence

and impact on ecological systems and the environment. It requires community partnerships and an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives. It empowers individuals and institutions to make a difference.

This workshop guide is a tool for discussing critical topics with core groups of conservationists and community leaders. "Community Voices for Sustainability" is the second in the Conservation Issues Forum Series produced by the League's Sustainability Education Project. It helps community members identify genuine decision-making opportunities and build a community-wide process for promoting sustainability. The first publication, "Coming to Terms with Sustainability," explores the concept of sustainability.

Please let us know how you use these materials by completing the Workshop Leader's Reporting Form on page 29 and mailing it to the Izaak Walton League of America, Sustainability Education Project, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, Md. 20878-2983; or faxing it to (301) 548-0149.

I. Workshop Planning

Introduction

This guide describes a series of six activities through which community members may work together to develop strategies to address community sustainability issues. It provides guidelines for organizing and conducting a six-hour workshop for 12 to 36 people.

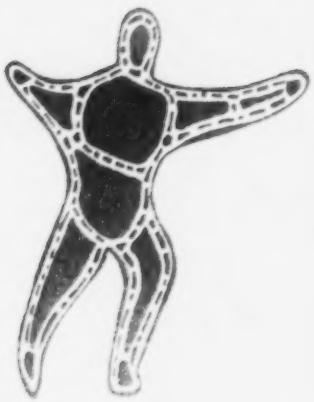
Recognizing that not every community will use these materials the same way, "Community Voices for Sustainability" is designed to be adaptable to your community's requirements. You can make the times for the activities longer or shorter, or even conduct the activities in a series of two or more workshops. Some of the activities can be left out completely, but careful attention should be paid to the activity sequence. The activities presented in this guide have been used successfully by League chapters and other organizations and ordered to help participants build the knowledge they need to better address sustainability issues.

If invited participants are unfamiliar with the concept of sustainability, activities from "Coming to Terms With Sustainability" may be used as an introduction. The activities are designed to help participants construct an individual understanding of sustainability concepts. "Coming to Terms With Sustainability" is available from the League's Sustainability Education Project.

Funding

A critical first workshop planning step is determining the resources available to cover the expenses you likely will incur in the process of planning, conducting or following up on the workshop. Volunteer-run workshops for about 36 people, held in rent-free meeting spaces, may cost as much as $500 for printing, postage, office supplies and food. Donations from local businesses, nonprofit organizations or government agencies may be available to offset costs. In addition, donated services may cover photocopying, office supply and refreshment costs.

Workshop Committee and Leader



The workshop may be organized and run by a single person. We recommend that the workshop organizer invite a number of volunteers representing other organizations or government agencies to help plan and run the workshop. In most cases, a member of the organizing committee can best serve as the workshop leader.

The workshop leader's job is not to change or mold people's positions about a subject. The role of the leader is to facilitate the exchange of information, foster learning, keep the meeting within the allotted time period and organize the information to meet the needs of the group. Participants must be assured that their opinions can be aired and considered equally with all others.

Participants

The workshop organizing committee should invite participants who are interested in sustainability and who represent a range of interests, experiences and expertise. Keep in mind that not everyone invited will be able to attend. It may take more than 50 invitations to recruit 30 participants. Invitations by phone or in person best assure that people will attend the workshop. Written invitations or workshop announcements also may be used.

Participants may be any age. They may be individual community members or members of sustainability-focused groups; conservation organizations; civic, church and service groups; businesses; local government; colleges or schools. These people later may form a core leadership group that may initiate community-wide sustainability projects.

Facility

Workshops should be held in a neutral location, a location where no invited participants will feel uncomfortable or that any particular interest — such as environmental or economic development proponents — will dominate the workshop. Public meeting spaces are best. Possible locations for workshops include public libraries, local schools or colleges, or community centers.

Hold your workshop in a facility or room that is the appropriate size for the number of expected participants. The room should be spacious enough that participants have ample room to work, but not so large that they feel overwhelmed by open space. Seating arrangements are important. Chairs should be arranged so participants face one another. A circular or semicircular arrangement often works best.

The chosen facility should be able to accommodate audio-visual equipment. This means that access to electrical outlets and room-darkening window coverings likely will be important. Slide and overhead projectors also will require a projection screen. Having extra extension cords and spare projection equipment light bulbs on hand the day of the workshop will help prevent any last minute audio-visual problems. An audio recording system also may be used to record the workshop presentations and discussions.

All workshops will need large paper pads and colored marking pens to record participant responses and an area to display participant work. The display area should be in easy view of the participants.

If a meal or mealtime is included in your agenda, it is best to keep the participants at the workshop location. Mealtimes provide an important opportunity for people to get to know one another and exchange information. Whether participants bring food or a simple meal is catered (at low or no cost to participants), the facility should have an indoor dining area. If your workshop takes place on a good weather day, an outdoor dining area may provide another option.

Simple beverages and light refreshments — drinks and snacks — should be provided throughout the workshop. The facility needs to be able to accommodate or provide coffeepots, water heaters, beverage containers, serving tables and trash cans.

Suggested Agenda

Welcome and Introduction
Participants introduce themselves and the workshop leader explains the agenda. **Time: 15 minutes.**

Activity 1: The Power of One
Participants individually complete questionnaires and assess ways his or her everyday actions support the health and well-being of ourselves, our community and the environment in which we live. **Time: 20 minutes.**

Activity 2: Gauging Engagement Potential
Participants identify and assess governmental and community characteristics and processes that facilitate genuine decision-making opportunities for citizens. **Time: 55 minutes.**

Short Break
Refreshments, such as beverages and fruit or cookies, are served while participants take a break. **Time: 15 minutes.**

Activity 3: Community Success Stories Panel
Community members explain local projects that address economic development, environmental or social justice, environmental health and natural resource conservation. **Time: 60 minutes.**

Lunch Break
Participants dine together at the workshop site. Lunch may be provided by a local caterer or participants may bring bag lunches. **Time: 45 minutes.**

Activity 4: Building a Constituency
Participants identify groups and individuals whose participation is needed to build an inclusive community sustainability initiative. **Time: 45 minutes.**

Short Break
Refreshments, such as beverages and fruit or cookies, are served while participants take a break. **Time: 15 minutes.**

Activity 5: The Art of Listening
Participants design a survey for gathering community-wide information as a starting point for building an inclusive community sustainability initiative. **Time: 60 minutes.**

Activity 6: Next Steps
Participants identify next steps they will take to act on the ideas generated through workshop discussions. **Time: 30 minutes.**

Agenda

Set the agenda about five weeks prior to the workshop so the schedule of activities may be included in workshop invitations and announcements. The "Suggested Agenda" on page 6 provides an outline for a day-long, six-hour "Community Voices for Sustainability" workshop. Each activity is explained in detail in the pages that follow. The objective for each activity is stated briefly and the time allocated for each activity is estimated. The workshop leader may decide in advance that more or less time will be required to complete individual activities, that certain activities will be omitted or that additional discussion time will be needed between activities.

Participants should be given printed copies of the agenda, which may be a list of activity titles with short descriptions of each activity. You also may include the names of invited speakers and the organizations they represent in activity descriptions. The agenda should include actual start and stop times — for example 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. — rather than the duration of the activities provided in the "Suggested Agenda."

An agenda — written in large letters on a big pad or poster board with start and stop times clearly marked — also should be posted in the front of the room.

Registration

After completing the agenda, determine whether any participant fees to cover workshop costs (such as lunch or refreshments) will be needed and develop a registration form that will provide participants with workshop information and registration instructions. Registration materials should include a copy of the agenda and basic information about the following:

- What the event is;
- Where it will be held;
- When it will begin and end;
- Who will be sponsoring and running the workshop;
- Specific information about the workshop's goals and objectives; and
- How participants may register.

The registration materials may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to potential participants. The materials also may be posted on sponsoring organizations' World Wide Web sites, printed in organizational newsletters or advertised through other media outlets, depending on the workshop's targeted audience.

The registration materials also should include a form for participants to complete and return to the workshop organizer. The form should be designed to collect essential information about the participant, including his or her name, mailing address (home, business or both), e-mail address and daytime and evening telephone numbers. If participants will be representing businesses, organizations or government agencies, information about the participant's employer and volunteer organizations with which the participant is associated may be requested. If you are serving lunch and providing meal options (vegetarian, lowfat, etc.), provide a space where registrants may indicate if they will be having lunch and their meal preference.

Information from completed registration forms may be entered onto a computer database or organized in another way. A database has several advantages. It will aid in the production of nametags and lists of registered participants for on-site check-in and distribution to participants. The database also can be used to generate mailing labels for post-workshop follow-up reports or correspondence.

Press Release

After completing the agenda and registration materials, develop a mailing list for members of the media you may want to make aware of your workshop or invite to attend. Develop a press release to mail to local newspapers, radio and television stations.

The press release should include basic information about the following:

- What the event is;
- Where it will be held;
- When it will begin and end;
- Who will be sponsoring and running the workshop;
- Specific information about the workshop's goals and objectives; and
- How media representatives may register to attend.

You may create a lead sentence or paragraph that connects a current community issue to the workshop topics. Below is an example. The bracketed text should be modified to reflect your community's experience and the workshop details.

> *At a recent public hearing, community members expressed a desire to be more involved in decision-making processes prior to public comment periods. Many in attendance expressed interest in citizen working groups that may help shape future policy decisions rather than simply review them.*
>
> *On [date], from [start time] to [stop time], the [organization name(s)] will host "Community Voices for Sustainability." The workshop will be held at [place], located at [street address], in [city or town].*

Workshop participants will include residents, educators, planners, community leaders, business leaders, government employees and elected officials. The workshop will explore ways to promote community-wide citizen participation in activities that enhance our quality of life, build economic security and protect the environment.

Local media representatives are invited to attend the workshop. To register, please call [name] at [telephone number] on or before [registration deadline].

Materials Checklist

Prior to the workshop, collect these supplies and copy the participant handouts for each of the activities.

- ☐ Participant Sign-In Form(s)
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Flip chart(s) with large paper or poster board
- ☐ Colored marking pens (10 or more)
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Clock
- ☐ Index cards (two per person)
- ☐ Blank sheets of paper (one per person)
- ☐ White envelopes (one per person)
- ☐ Pocket Folders (one per person)
- ☐ Participant Activity Sheets (copy one of each per person)
  - ☐ "The Power of One" (pp. 15 - 16)
  - ☐ "Gauging Engagement Potential" (pp. 18 - 19)
  - ☐ "Building a Constituency" (pp. 22 - 23)
  - ☐ "The Art of Listening" (p. 26)
  - ☐ "Participant's Workshop Evaluation" (p. 28)
- ☐ Audio-Visual Equipment (as needed)

Planning Checklist

Complete these tasks **SIX WEEKS** prior to the workshop.

- ☐ Form a workshop organizing committee and select a workshop leader.
- ☐ Select a date, time and place for the workshop.
- ☐ Determine the number of participants you can accommodate.
- ☐ Identify major stakeholder groups in your community and identify members of non-governmental organizations, businesses, schools, and government agencies and offices you will invite. Enter their names and addresses on a computer data base.
- ☐ Develop a draft agenda.
- ☐ If you include the "Community Success Stories Panel" activity on your agenda, identify and invite local community leaders who may make panel presentations.
- ☐ Develop a draft budget for the workshop and identify members of the organizing committee who may approach local businesses or organizations for support.

Complete these tasks **FIVE WEEKS** prior to the workshop.

- ☐ Finalize the agenda.
- ☐ Identify and contract a food service provider (if a catered lunch is part of your program).
- ☐ Develop a final workshop invitation list.
- ☐ Determine whether members of the general public will be invited and develop a public service announcement if necessary.
- ☐ Reserve necessary audio-visual equipment such as flip charts, slide or overhead projectors, and a projection screen.
- ☐ Identify local media outlets and contact people.

Complete these tasks **FOUR WEEKS** prior to the workshop.

- ☐ Mail invitations to identified participants.
- ☐ Schedule volunteers to help with workshop registration, refreshments, audio-visual coordination, set up and clean up, photography, and pre- and post-workshop press releases.

Complete these tasks **ONE WEEK** prior to the workshop. (It may not be possible to complete some of these tasks until just before the day of the workshop.)

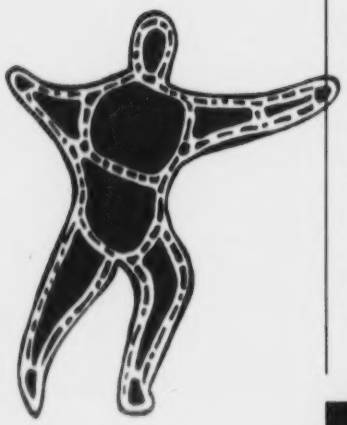
- ☐ Collect participant reservations and compile a participant list.
- ☐ Print the agenda.
- ☐ Collect all items listed in the Materials Checklist.
- ☐ Prepare a brief introduction to local community leaders invited to share "Community Success Stories."
- ☐ Organize participant handouts in folders.
- ☐ Make name tags for registered participants.
- ☐ Confirm all workshop volunteers, presenters and organizers.
- ☐ Prepare any necessary payments, such as those for a caterer or equipment rental. Confirm caterer and equipment.

Complete these tasks **THE DAY OF** the workshop.

- ☐ Arrive early and set up the room, the registration area and refreshments.
- ☐ Make sure all equipment is in place and in good working order.
- ☐ Make sure all volunteers, presenters and organizers are in attendance.
- ☐ Recognize workshop supporters, especially those who have provided funding or services.
- ☐ Follow the agenda. Stay on time.
- ☐ Invite participants to join your organizing committee to plan future activities.

Complete these tasks **AFTER** the workshop.

- ☐ Thank all volunteers, presenters, organizers and supporters.
- ☐ Write and send a brief article about the workshop's outcomes and identified next steps to local media. Include photos and identify the individuals pictured.
- ☐ Complete and return the Workshop Leader's Reporting Form (p. 29) to the Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, Md. 20878-2983. You also can fax it to (301) 548-0149.
- ☐ Meet with the organizing committee to plan future activities.
- ☐ Prepare a mailing to participants outlining future activities and inviting their participation.



II. Getting the Workshop Started

Welcome and Introduction

Have all participants sign in on the Participant Sign-In Form as they arrive. Confirm those participants who have pre-registered and paid any required fees. Collect any required fees from participants who have not registered in advance. Provide participants with name tags, pencils (if necessary) and a complete package of printed workshop materials, including copies of the agenda and activities.

The Welcome and Introduction should take about **15 minutes.**

WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ **Open the workshop by introducing yourself. State the purpose of the workshop and describe links the workshop may have to current or future community activities.**

- ☐ Ask representatives of sponsoring organizations to introduce themselves and their organizations. If representatives of sponsoring organizations are not present, acknowledge their contributions.

- ☐ Ask participants briefly to say their names, tell where they live and explain what attracted them to the discussion about citizen participation and sustainability. Remind participants to keep their introductions brief.

- ☐ Direct the participants' attention to the large, easy-to-read copy of the agenda displayed in the front of the room. Walk the participants through the agenda. Explain the objective of each activity. Indicate the time allotted for each activity. Make sure everyone agrees with the time schedule. If they don't, have the group make and agree on any changes. Explain that you will use the agenda as a tool for keeping the meeting on time. Keep in mind that it may take several minutes to reconvene the group after breaks.

- ☐ Sometimes, complex issues may emerge for which the group agrees there is no quick answer. Indicate in advance that if you need to cut a discussion short to meet time limits, you will make a note of the point and may address it during "Activity 6: Next Steps" or another part of the workshop. Label a large sheet of paper "Points to Consider Further." Display the paper in the front of the room and record points on the sheet as needed during the course of the workshop. Some of the "Points to Consider Further" may provide the topics for further meetings or workshops.

Participant Sign-In Form

Please print clearly. The information will be used to provide you with updates about community sustainability issues, activities and events.

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____)_____ E-mail _____

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____)_____ E-mail _____

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____)_____ E-mail _____

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____)_____ E-mail _____

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____)_____ E-mail _____

III. Workshop Activities

Activity 1: The Power of One

Open the workshop with the self-audit activity, "The Power of One." The object of the audit is to provide participants time to reflect on how their daily activities affect their personal health and well-being as well as the health and well-being of their community and the environment in which they live.

This opening activity should take about **20 minutes**.

WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ **Distribute a copy of "The Power of One" activity sheet to each participant. Ask participants to circle:**
  C for those actions you do consistently or very often;
  S for those actions you sometimes do; and
  N for those actions you never do.
- ☐ Ask participants to draw a star beside those actions they would like to do more often, even if these actions are not currently possible.
- ☐ Ask participants to answer the questions at the end of the hand-out.
- ☐ Explain that participants will have seven minutes to complete the self-audit.
- ☐ Debrief participants by explaining that the point of this activity is not to make anyone feel guilty about the way they live. The point of this opening activity is to help people understand that our everyday actions support the health and well-being of ourselves, our community and the environment in which we live.
- ☐ Ask several participants to volunteer to share one action they would like to do more often and explain what conditions (social, economic, political or environmental) could be changed to make it possible or easier to do.
- ☐ Conclude by asking participants to think about simple criteria they may use to guide everyday choices about what to do, where to go, what to purchase and other activities. Criteria that may guide individual decisions and promote individual, community and environmental health and well-being may be as simple as the following:
  - Does the action minimize or reduce my impact on the environment?
  - Does the action improve the quality of my life?
  - Are the action's potential benefits and negative consequences just and equitable?

TAKE SEVEN MINUTES TO COMPLETE THIS ACTIVITY. Think about how the life you live supports your health and well-being, as well as the health and well-being of your community and the environment in which you live.

THE POWER OF ONE

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET

Circle:

C for those actions you do consistently or very often;
S for those actions you sometimes do; and
N for those actions you never do.

Draw a ★ star beside those actions you would like to do more often — even those actions that are not currently possible.

CONSUMPTION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Before I purchase an item, I consider whether I can get along without buying it.	C	S	N
Before I purchase an item, I consider whether it is made of recycled materials.	C	S	N
Before I purchase an item, I think about how I will dispose of it when it is no longer useful to me.	C	S	N
I use nontoxic/natural/recycled supplies in my household.	C	S	N
I recycle/repair clothes, tools, equipment, materials and appliances.	C	S	N
I use nontoxic/biodegradable/recyclable materials in building/maintaining my home.	C	S	N
I choose home furnishings made of natural/recyclable materials.	C	S	N
I choose reusable alternatives to disposable supplies (cloth shopping bags, cloth napkins, etc.).	C	S	N
I buy unpackaged/bulk foods and products.	C	S	N
I recycle/reuse cans, bottles, paper, cardboard and plastic.	C	S	N
I compost organic waste (food scraps, yard clippings, etc.).	C	S	N
I maintain and operate tools, equipment and vehicles in ways that minimize or prevent noise.	C	S	N
I use energy-saving appliances and lighting systems.	C	S	N
I turn off lights and appliances when I'm not using them.	C	S	N
I walk, bike, use public transportation and/or carpool.	C	S	N
I minimize motor vehicle use by completing multiple tasks per trip.	C	S	N
I maintain my motor vehicle and drive carefully for maximum fuel efficiency.	C	S	N
I use a composting toilet, low-flush toilet or toilet dam.	C	S	N
I turn off water while shaving, brushing my teeth and shampooing and use low bath-water levels.	C	S	N
I minimize water waste by repairing plumbing leaks.	C	S	N
I minimize water waste by landscaping with drought-tolerant native plants, and by mulching.	C	S	N
I promote environmentally responsible policies and purchasing practices where I work.	C	S	N
I buy locally and bioregionally produced foods and products.	C	S	N
I borrow/co-own/share tools, equipment and appliances.	C	S	N

DIET AND HEALTH

I take preventative measures to support my physical health (exercise, sun protection, etc.).	C	S	N
I choose food products based on nutritional value.	C	S	N
I choose food products based on the agricultural practices used to produce them.	C	S	N
I choose foods based on the benefits they provide to individual and family food producers.	C	S	N
I take care of my psychological health (relaxation time, self-improvement activities, etc.).	C	S	N

Recreation

I create and share some form of artistic expression.	C S N
I take time for fun and celebration in my life.	C S N
I choose recreational activities that minimize environmental impacts and natural resource use.	C S N

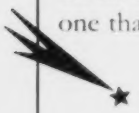
Religion and Spirituality

I have a personal or group spiritual practice that supports my well-being.	C S N
I respect the different spiritual ways of others.	C S N
I seek and develop a sense of purpose and meaning in my life.	C S N

Community Participation

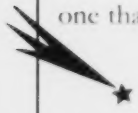
I take personal action to restore/preserve natural habitats and green/open space.	C S N
I participate in social/cultural events and celebrations.	C S N
I take time to enjoy the art of others.	C S N
I seek out information about social, economic and environmental issues.	C S N
I share my knowledge of social, economic and environmental issues with others.	C S N
I participate in governmental processes in my community.	C S N
I respect diverse perspectives in my community and support creative solutions to common problems reached through consensus-building processes.	C S N
I take responsibility for my actions and choose to experience problems as opportunities for learning and personal growth.	C S N
I take problems, at the earliest appropriate time, directly to the person/group that can resolve them.	C S N
I seek and support the use of a mediator in any conflict in which direct resolution is not achieved.	C S N
I greet my neighbors when I see them around my neighborhood.	C S N
I volunteer service and take personal action to improve my community.	C S N
I volunteer service and take personal action to improve other communities.	C S N

Of all the items I placed a star beside (indicating they were actions I would like to do more often) the one that would be easiest to do is:



It would be easiest because:

Of all the items I placed a star beside (indicating they were actions I would like to do more often) the one that would be most difficult to do is:



It would be most difficult because:

This activity is adapted from a questionnaire developed by the Shared Living Resource Center, Inc. and Global Action Plan International and circulated by the Eco-Village Network at the NGO Forum of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, 1996.

Activity 2: Gauging Engagement Potential

Vibrant communities are places where citizens are engaged actively in meaningful decision-making about land use, economic development and transportation, among many other issues.

Why does one community more effectively engage its citizens in decision-making and problem solving than others? In 1996, the nonprofit organization America Speaks examined successful citizen-initiated community projects across the United States. They found these communities had worked deliberately to establish government policies, support public and private institutions, recruit businesses and foster relationships among community members that successfully engaged and sustained citizen-initiated community projects. Their coast-to-coast review identified nine characteristics shared among communities where successful community-led projects had been implemented. These criteria may be used to determine the existence of or need for support systems, government policies or networking opportunities that may promote successful citizen-initiated projects.

This activity should take about **55 minutes.**

Vibrant communities are places where citizens are engaged actively in meaningful decision-making about land use, economic development and transportation, among many other issues.

WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ **Distribute a copy of the "Gauging Engagement Potential" activity sheet to each participant. Explain the origin of the list of community characteristics, as described in the preceding paragraphs.**
- ☐ Ask participants to form small groups of three to five people. Ask groups first to use **two minutes** to silently read the nine community characteristics and take **three minutes** briefly to discuss them. Encourage groups to clarify any of the characteristics about which participants have questions before beginning the next step.
- ☐ On the handout, ask participants to take **five minutes** individually to rate their communities and answer the questions as directed on the activity hand-out sheet.
- ☐ Once everyone has finished, or the time has elapsed, ask participants to choose one person to act as the small group's recorder. Ask participants to follow the "Directions for Small Group Discussion" on the second page of the activity hand-out sheet. The small group discussion should take about **25 minutes.**
- ☐ When the groups have completed their discussions, call everyone back together. Use the final **20 minutes** of this activity to allow a representative from each group briefly to share the priority actions they identified at the conclusion of their discussion.

GAUGING ENGAGEMENT POTENTIAL

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET

Below are nine characteristics of communities that successfully encourage and sustain citizen engagement in decision-making and problem solving. Take **five minutes** to rate your community and answer the questions on the next page. Rate your community by circling:

1 for those characteristics that are strong in your community;
2 for those characteristics that need to be strengthened;
3 for those characteristics that do not yet exist; and
DON'T KNOW for those characteristics you do not know enough about to rate.

CHARACTERISTIC	RATING
1. Political, civic and corporate leaders have vision and understand the importance of listening to all voices in the community.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
2. Community citizen leaders have vision, are self-initiating, and focus on the common good.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
3. Institutional and grassroots leaders recognize that the necessary changes are systemic, and both individuals and institutions carry the responsibility for making them.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
4. Media outlets — print, television, radio and the Internet — have embraced civic/public journalism values and commit resources to building community.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
5. Sufficient technology infrastructure — hardware and software — is in place to support communitywide and regionwide dialogue and deliberation processes.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
6. Projects involve an area that crosses traditional political jurisdictions and reflect a natural ecological and economic region.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
7. There is an existing infrastructure of citizen involvement so that people who participate in the project have opportunities to stay involved for the long term.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
8. Resources are committed to capacity building for people at all economic levels in the community, reflecting the skills needed for leadership in the next century.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW
9. There is both an established and an expressed public valuing of trust, respect and compassion among the people engaged in the civic life of the community.	1 2 3 DON'T KNOW

These criteria were developed in 1996 by America Speaks, 915 15th Street, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C., 20005. Used by permission.

Look at the characteristics you rated **2** or **3**. Which two characteristics are most important to strengthen? Describe one **ACTION** you would take to strengthen each of these two characteristics.

ACTION to strengthen the first characteristic:

ACTION to strengthen the second characteristic:

Take a look at the bright side. Describe two examples of **PROJECTS** in your community that succeeded because of active citizen involvement.

First **PROJECT** Example:

Second **PROJECT** Example:

Directions for Small Group Discussion

Once everyone in your small group has finished individually rating the characteristics and answering the questions, you should do the following:

- ☐ Assign someone in your small group to write down what is being said using the big paper pad and colored markers. This person will be called the recorder.
- ☐ Ask each person to take a turn and share one of the **ACTIONS** he or she described at the top of this page. When it is your turn you will need to be brief. The recorder should label the sheet **"ACTIONS"** and write down what is being said. Take no more than **10 minutes** to do this.
- ☐ Then ask each person to take a turn and share one of the examples of citizen-initiated **PROJECTS**. The recorder should label the sheet **"PROJECTS"** and write down what is being said. Take no more than **10 minutes** to do this.
- ☐ With the remaining time, identify one of the listed **ACTIONS** that might be pursued as a priority of the group. Tell why it is a priority and what possible citizen-initiated community projects it may facilitate. Take **five minutes** to do this.

Activity 3: Community Success Stories Panel

A "Community Success Stories Panel" is an effective way to introduce your community to itself. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge positive examples of what community members already have accomplished.

To organize a panel for the workshop, identify two or three organizations that have implemented successful community sustainability initiatives. Projects should address environmental, economic and social concerns in an integrated manner and respect environmental and social justice principles. Projects individually need not meet all these criteria, but could address the broad characteristics that promote community sustainability.

Examples of community sustainability initiatives include the following:

- "Green" technology job training programs for disadvantaged youth;
- Municipal organic composting and community gardening programs; and
- Affordable housing projects that preserve open space and are accessible to public transportation.

In addition, priority may be given to projects that involve community members in their design and implementation.

After identifying projects that will spark participants' imaginations, recruit organizational representatives to make 10 - 12 minute presentations. Contact presenters by phone or in writing, but confirm their participation in writing. Provide them with a brief outline of what you hope they will discuss. Include with the confirmation letter a copy of the agenda, information about the time period when they are to speak and a map with directions to the workshop site (if necessary). Encourage presenters to use visual aids like slides and blueprints, and confirm presenters' audio-visual needs in advance.

Plan the panel so that time is allocated for participants to ask the panelists questions after all the presentations are complete.

Plan about **one hour** for this activity.

Activity 4: Building a Constituency

The challenge of engaging a community in planning for its future is one of the greatest faced by community sustainability advocates. Broad citizen participation is required to develop successful strategies that promote community sustainability.

Community members are best qualified to describe the kind of development that is best for their community.

In most large communities it would be difficult to involve every individual citizen in decision-making processes. In fact, this may be neither essential nor desirable. But every citizen must feel entitled, welcomed and even encouraged to participate in decision-making. Community sustainability organizers should strive to ensure that the community's range of experiences, needs and concerns are represented at all stages.

The first step in designing an inclusive process for promoting community sustainability is the identification of all local and regional community-based groups — both public and private, large and small. After these groups are identified, consider those citizens — especially youth — whose voices are not represented through any of these groups. They too must be included in the process.

After identifying these groups and individuals, think about how they should be contacted. Should an introductory letter be used? Should it be followed up with a phone call? Will the group or individual's participation require a face-to-face meeting of some kind?

Think about the problems you may encounter as you ask groups and individuals to participate. Do they have the human or economic resources needed to participate? Will they need transportation, child care, etc.? Will they be able to participate regularly, on certain days of the week or certain times of the day?

Finally, consider creative solutions to address any problems or barriers that may prevent groups or individuals from participating.

The agenda recommends **45 minutes** for this activity.

WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ **Ask participants to form small groups of four to eight people.**
- ☐ **Begin this activity by asking participants to spend 5 minutes individually to record their thoughts about who these groups or individuals are, what approaches would work best, any problems that may be encountered and creative solutions to these possible problems. Ask participants to record their responses on the "Building a Constituency" activity sheet.**
- ☐ Next, ask the groups to take about **20 minutes** to share their responses and refine their outreach target audience lists. Each group should assign one person to record responses on a large paper pad. The recorder should draw and label columns on the large paper pad, similar to those on the activity sheet.
- ☐ Bring the groups back together. Take about **20 minutes** and ask a representative from each group to briefly report back to the whole group.

BUILDING A CONSTITUENCY

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET

Successful community sustainability projects are community-initiated and community-led. Everyone must feel welcome to participate in the planning and decision-making processes. Everyone's concerns and interests need to be heard and adequately represented.

Developing a strategy for building an inclusive process first requires that you identify all the "players" — key individuals, organizations, policymakers, university faculty, professional planners, potential funders, etc.

When developing your list, don't forget to consider which resources may be necessary to implement any project the group develops and who controls those resources. Also consider those individuals who will be important to implementing projects over time. Finally, don't forget to include youth in the process.

Be clear about the challenges you might have in bringing key players into your process and which specific techniques you would use to meet the challenge.

DIRECTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. When everyone has filled out the chart or the **five minutes** has elapsed, quickly assign someone to be the recorder. The recorder should prepare a sheet of paper on the large paper pad to record participant responses. Create columns for "**WHO**," "**METHOD OF APPROACH**," "**POSSIBLE PROBLEMS**" and "**CREATIVE SOLUTIONS**," similar to those on the participant activity sheet.

2. The recorder should begin the discussion by asking each person, one at a time, to contribute one individual, organization or decision maker, and to describe the method of approach, problems (if any) and creative solutions for recruiting this constituent's participation. Then ask participants to contribute additional ideas. The recorder will write down all the ideas on the large paper. Take **15 minutes** to compile your list.

3. As a small group, take a step back and look at the list. Are there any other individuals, organizations or decision makers who need to be included? Take **five minutes** to discuss and list these.

4. Rejoin the large group. A representative from each small group will share the group's list with the entire group.

This activity is adapted from workshop exercises conducted by Marcia McNally of Community Development by Design using activities developed by the Urban Resources Institute, 1996.

Building a Constituency

Take **five minutes** individually to add as much information to the chart as you can, or as time allows.

Who individual, organization, agency, group, etc.	Method of Approach letter, phone call, face to face meeting, etc.	Possible Problems transportation, work schedule, child care, etc.	Creative Solutions

Activity 5: The Art of Listening

Once you've identified the large number of potential participants (not to mention the large number of special interests they may have), the process of designing a communitywide process to promote community sustainability can be daunting. A preliminary information-gathering project may provide awareness and understanding of the issues on people's minds. This information is an essential first step in planning a meaningful communitywide meeting. Whether organizers gather information through a door-to-door survey, a face-to-face questionnaire at a community gathering place, or a mail or telephone poll, good questions are essential.

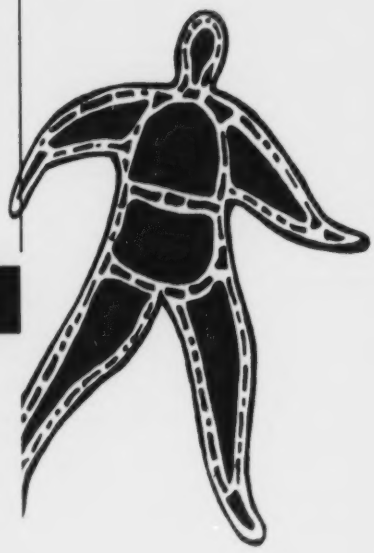
Good questions may have two or more of the following characteristics. First, they should be relevant to local activities. They also should cover a range of economic, social and environmental topics. They should balance positive and negative aspects of community life, with an emphasis on possibilities for improvement. They should ask the respondent to think critically and long-term. Questions should be sufficiently open-ended, and should not lead or favor specific responses. Finally, and most importantly, all questions should be clear, concise and require no additional explanation.

When ordering survey questions, begin with questions that are easy to answer and follow with more complex questions that require greater thought or consideration. Begin with questions that are broad and general before asking questions that require greater specificity.

While the survey instrument may be designed by a small core group, it must be administered to a broad cross section of the community in order to gather the information required to design an effective communitywide meeting. Insight into critical issues allows meeting planners to make connections among these issues and sustainability concepts in pre-meeting publications and press releases. Technical advice about survey design may be obtained from staff of local colleges or universities.

The first step in preparing good questions is to develop and test draft question sets.

This activity will take about **60 minutes**.



WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ Ask each participant to use "The Art of Listening" participant activity sheet to prepare a set of five to 10 questions he or she might use to interview community members. Ask participants to order the questions. Simple fact-gathering questions such as occupation and years of residence should precede more complex questions requiring greater thought. This sequencing establishes a degree of familiarity between the interviewer and the person being interviewed before more difficult questions are posed. Explain that they should take about **15 minutes** individually to complete this task.

- ☐ When everyone is ready, ask participants to break into pairs. Ask each participant to take turns interviewing his or her partner. Remember that the interviewer should simply read the question as written and not offer any additional explanation. When community members are surveyed, the person conducting the survey will be required simply to read the question as written. Adding additional information to the questions may invalidate responses. Ask participants to record the other person's responses to their questions. Take **10 minutes** for this task.

- ☐ Next ask the pairs to talk about what they learned and how their questions could be improved. Ask participants to make changes or add questions that may improve the question sets. Ask each pair to record its three most successful questions on a large sheet of paper. Take **10 minutes** for this task.

- ☐ Bring the group back together. Ask each participant to share his or her most successful questions with the group. Begin with examples of simple, fact-gathering questions and finish with the more complex, opinion-polling questions. Briefly discuss which questions were best and why. Take **25 minutes** to complete this activity

THE ART OF LISTENING

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET

Working alone, take **15 minutes** to prepare a set of five to 10 questions you might use to interview community members.

Order the questions. Simple fact-gathering questions such as occupation and years of residence should precede more complex questions requiring greater thought. The questions should provide insight into participants' creative ideas about how to address sustainability, projected growth and regional development over the next 20 years. Conclude with an open-ended question like, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?"

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

- ☐ The next step is to try out some of your questions. Select four or five questions that would best get input about how to address community development over the next 20 years.
- ☐ Break into pairs and take turns interviewing each other — five minutes each (**10 minutes total**). Read your question as written. Do not provide any additional explanation. Record your partner's response.
- ☐ With your partner, discuss what you learned and how your questions could be improved. Make changes or add questions that may improve your question set. Take **10 minutes** to complete this activity.
- ☐ Return to the large group. In the last **25 minutes** of this activity, the workshop leader will ask participants first to share their best opening questions — the general questions used to collect factual information. A recorder will write these on a large paper pad. The workshop leader then will ask participants to share their best complex, opinion-polling questions. The recorder will write these on a large paper pad. Discuss any additional questions that may be added and ways you may use this process to launch a communitywide project.

Activity 6: Next Steps

Helping participants decide what they may do next is a critical element of this workshop. The group of people attending the workshop may decide collectively to engage in a follow-up activity. What is more likely to occur is that new alliances among individuals, private organizations, business and government agencies may emerge. These new working groups may identify and address specific issues or projects that promote community sustainability.

This closing activity will take about **30 minutes**.

WORKSHOP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- ☐ Distribute two index cards to each participant. Ask each participant to write down two high priority actions that may advance community sustainability. The actions may be appropriate for an individual, a single organization, several organizations working collaboratively or the entire community working collectively to undertake. Record one action on each card. Ask participants to consider action ideas that may have been expressed during other workshop activities. Take **three to five minutes** to complete this task.
- ☐ Ask participants, one at a time, to describe one of the actions they recorded on their cards. As participants describe and explain the action, use masking tape to display it on a board or wall in front of the group. (You also could use index-card-size, self-stick notes.) Group similar actions together in horizontal lines. Actions may be grouped by who may implement them, by issue, etc.
- ☐ After each participant has offered one of his or her action ideas, ask participants to offer additional action ideas they recorded that have not been mentioned. Add these to the grouped responses on the wall. Encourage participants to think about follow-up meetings or other next steps that may occur among groups of participants. Encourage them to set a future meeting date, even if that meeting is to continue the discussion about next steps.
- ☐ Distribute a blank sheet of paper and envelope to each participant. Ask people to think about one action they will take in the next three weeks to advance community sustainability. Ask participants to record the action on the blank sheet of paper, place it in the envelope, then address the envelope to themselves. Explain that the envelope will be mailed to them in three weeks.
- ☐ As participants complete this final workshop activity, ask them to complete the "Participant's Workshop Evaluation."
- ☐ Close the workshop by again thanking participants and workshop organizers.

Participant's Workshop Evaluation

1. On a scale of one to five (one = poor and five = excellent), how would you rate the overall workshop?

2. Which parts of the workshop were strongest?

3. Which parts of the workshop were less effective? How could they be improved?

4. Were there missing pieces of information?

5. How would you change the agenda?

6. Who else needs to be involved in this core group of sustainability advocates?

7. What do you think is your personal role?

8. Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Workshop Leader's Reporting Form

Workshop Leader Information

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone (_____) _____

Workshop Information

Workshop Site _____

City _____ State _____

Date _____ Time _____ - _____

Number of Workshop Participants _____

Audience

Describe the kinds of organizations and interests the participants represented.

General Audience Feedback

Comments about audience response to activities, materials and interesting or unusual participant remarks.

Workshop Leader Feedback

Comments about agenda, activities, materials and suggestions for improvement.

Outcome

What do you think will happen as a result of the workshop?

Please mail to the Izaak Walton League of America, Sustainability Education Project, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, Md. 20878-2983. You can also fax this form to (301)548-0149.

Glossary

bioregion: an area defined by its unique ecological characteristics

capacity building processes: opportunities to gain information and experience that improve citizens' ability to do something

civic democracy: the practice of democracy at the municipal level where an active and engaged citizenry is the primary source of political power

community sustainability: the goal of a system of development cultivated in places where people pursue environmental stewardship, economic security, civic democracy and social justice as complementary goals

consensus: an agreement among people

conservation: the controlled use and protection of natural resources

ecological literacy: knowledge about the local and global environmental impacts of economic and social systems and understanding of the methods to address these impacts

ecological renewal rate: the amount of time required to regenerate a renewable natural resource or restore and stabilize biological, chemical or physical conditions altered by use or pollution

education about sustainability: the interdisciplinary use of civics, science, political science, geography and other traditional disciplines to advance environmental protection, economic security, civic democracy and social justice as complementary goals. Education about sustainability is a lifelong process that emphasizes systems thinking, partnerships, multicultural perspectives and citizen empowerment.

human carrying capacity: the maximum number of people, living at a specific level of natural resource consumption, that an area of land can support indefinitely

environmental justice: the act of making decisions that have just and equitable environmental consequences

green technology: methods of production and construction that waste no natural resources

social justice: the act of making decisions that have just and equitable social consequences

sustainable development: development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

sustainability: a state defined by desired social and economic conditions, governed by population size and the limits of ecological systems, achieved by meeting equitably the needs of current and future generations without a net loss in environmental integrity

stewardship: responsibility for the management of environmental, economic and social factors

systemic: pertaining to the elements that constitute a system, such as the system's underlying mind-set, goals and rules

systems theory: the idea that physical or non-material standing stocks obey scientific laws of conservation and accumulation as they are influenced by inflows and outflows regulated by negative-feedback loops

systems thinking: the application of systems theory

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Selected World Wide Web Sites

AMERICA SPEAKS — a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to strengthening the structures and processes by which U.S. citizens shape their practice of democracy.

http://www.americaspeaks.org

CENTER FOR LIVING DEMOCRACY — a national nonprofit organization working to transform democracy from a set of formal, political institutions to a rewarding way of life.

http://www.livingdemocracy.org

CIVIC PRACTICES NETWORK — a collaborative and nonpartisan project bringing together a diverse array of organizations and perspectives within the new citizenship movement.

http://www.cpn.org

CONTEXT INSTITUTE — a nonprofit research organization exploring what is involved in a humane, sustainable culture.

http://www.context.org

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA — a nonprofit grassroots conservation organization committed to the protection of the nation's soil, air, woods, water and wildlife.

http://www.iwla.org

JOINT CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES — a project of the National Association of Counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors that supports local elected officials' efforts to promote sustainability.

http://www.usmayors.org/sustainable

THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION — a foundation that encourages community sustainability through programs aimed at building civil and civic community.

http://www.johnsonfdn.org

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS — a nonprofit organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

http://www.lwv.org

NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE — a nonprofit advocacy organization promoting a new civic agenda to create communities that work for everyone and the principles of collaborative problem-solving and consensus-based decision-making.

http://www.ncl.org

PEW PARTNERSHIP FOR CIVIC CHANGE — a nonprofit foundation sponsoring a national initiative committed to community building, especially in smaller cities in the United States.

http://www.cpn.org/sections/affiliates/pew_partnership.html

ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE — a nonprofit research and education foundation that fosters the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources as a path to global security.

http://www.rmi.org

URBAN ECOLOGY — a nonprofit organization supporting and participating in the development of ecologically healthy and socially vital cities and towns.

http://www.best.com/~schmitty/ueindex.shtml

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S STOREFRONT OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLS — a government agency service providing information about community management, land planning, environmental protection and ecological restoration.

http://www.epa.gov/ecosystems/storefront/welcome.htm

The Izaak Walton League of America is a national conservation organization founded in 1922. Its members conserve, maintain, protect and restore the soil, forests, water and other natural resources of the United States. League members also promote means and opportunities for public education about these resources, their enjoyment and utilization.

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